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Breaking Away: A Study of First Generation College Students and Their Families

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Detailed family histories were taken of students who were the first in their families to go to college. This paper utilizes the psychoanalytic and family systems theory of Helm Stierlin and others to explore (1) how college matriculation for first-generation students is linked to multigenerational family dynamics, and (2) how these students reconcile (or do not reconcile) the often conflicting requirements of family membership and educational mobility. The same modernity that creates the possibility of opportunity for these students is seen also to create the potential for biographical and social dislocation.

Introduction

Several years ago the film *Breaking Away* was a box office success across America. On the surface it was the story of "town-gown" frictions between the "cutters" of Bloomington, Indiana—so called because they were the children of the men who mined the local limestone quarries—and the ostensibly more sophisticated but condescending students of Indiana University. The competition between them became centered on the annual campus bicycle race, the cutters for the first time entering a team of their own. The hero of the story, a cutter, trains excruciatingly hard, and at movie's end he breaks away from the pack of racers, and the locals triumph.

It was not, however, simply the tale of how some snobbish university students were put in their place. Rather, the story within the story was of the adolescent hero struggling to find his place and of his "breaking away" or separating from family and friends whom he loves but whose world he finds narrow and constricting. He wants more out

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of life, and even takes his college entrance examinations, though he would be the first among his family and friends to matriculate. Yet at the same time he fears losing what he already has. Growth, in other words, implies loss.[1]

During the past several years I have tape-recorded the life histories of 15 students who, like the hero of the movie, are the first in their families, and often among their friends, to go to college. The research was guided by two questions. First, how, if at all, do the social histories and psychodynamics of families contribute to the matriculation of first-generation students? Second, how do such students reconcile (or not reconcile) the often conflicting requirements of family membership and educational mobility? Said differently, I wanted to learn more about what is at stake—what is lost, gained, fought for, and given to compromise—when, for the first time in the history of a family, one of its members partakes of higher education.

A caution is in order. To focus on the difficulties of first-generation students, as this article does, is not to deny that their experiences can be exciting. Indeed, there was much rhapsodizing in the interviews, some of it presented below, of scales falling from the eyes and of the opening of new vistas and possibilities. As we explore the underside of upward mobility we should not lose sight of all that may be pleasurable and enriching.

Research Methods

Students participating in this study attended a variety of Boston-area colleges, from blue-collar commuter colleges to elite university campuses. Students were recruited through notices posted in dormitories and other campus buildings, advertisements in college newspapers, contacts made through friends, and, in one case, a chance meeting. By all conventional standards the students were from lower- or working-class families. Though both sexes and various ethnic and racial groups were included, the "sample" was too small and self-selected to claim representativeness.[2] The interviews were tape-recorded and ranged

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from one to seven hours (over several sessions), depending upon the responsiveness of individual students. Consisting of family, social, and educational histories covering three generations (grandparents, parents, and the students, in that order), the interviews were otherwise loosely structured so that self-portraits could be drawn freehand and leads could be pursued. While not satisfying the protocols of survey research, case-study approaches such as this usually render richer detail; in the present case this affords the opportunity to deepen our understanding of the psychological and social forces that mediate educational decisions.[3]

As several students commented, the interviews addressed issues they found difficult or impossible to discuss with family and friends who, they said, could not identify with their new experiences. Nor were these experiences easily discussed with their middle- and upper-class counterparts. Already feeling out of place and unsure of themselves, they did not want to call further attention to themselves as somehow "different." Said one student of this dilemma: "I wasn't able to communicate with anyone [on campus]. I spent a lot of time doing things by myself and I was getting really lonely. When I tried to talk to somebody, to explain how I was feeling or what I was going through, a lot people either didn't want to hear or they thought it was just weird. . . . At home they don't know. I don't talk about it, they don't know about anything. . . . There's a lot of stuff that goes on on this campus and my parents don't know what it means. It's like living in a totally different world."

Once students understood that I was eager to hear what they otherwise had no opportunity to express, they usually talked at length and with considerable intensity. Presumably, they also felt comfortable with me, that is, felt that I would be understanding, respectful, and trustworthy.

Family Role Assignments and First-Generation Students

The concept of family role assignment, prominent in contemporary psychodynamically oriented family theory, envisions the family as having a division of emotional labor with different members responsible for designated psychological tasks. The living out of such role assignments—the martyred parent and the parentified, achieving, or mediating child are familiar examples—has important consequences for each family member's self-imagery, emotional life, and behavior. Though it is a theme to which we shall return, it should be said here that being in the psychological employ of others, such as one's parents, can form as well as deform emotional life (Miller 1981). Indeed, it is a tenet of

modern family theory that messages about role assignments (mutable, diverse, and unconscious as these messages may be) are communicated in all families, and that they are related to the histories, psychologies, and family systems of our parents and their parents before them (Framo 1972; Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark 1973; Napier and Whitaker 1978). This intergenerational quality is also a theme to which we shall return.

Whether and to what extent role assignments are internalized, as well as how they find expression, varies from family to family, person to person, and over the life cycle. Their existence and effects, however, can usually be seen in bold relief during late adolescence and early adulthood, a phenomenon useful to our examination of first-generation students. In industrial societies these are years of heightened concern with identity (Erikson 1959) and increased disengagement or separation from parents.[4] The young adult typically strives to become more individuated and differentiated, that is, to acquire more independence and autonomy on various emotional, cognitive, and moral levels. This is often an erratic process, consisting of discontinuous episodes and even reversals as offspring variously accept, modify, or reject parental wishes or demands, and, since separation is a two-way street, as parents decide to "let go" or "hold on" as they move through their own life cycles. Separation can, of course, be "out of phase," occurring prematurely, later in life, or perhaps never at all. In most families, however, whatever roles have been assigned and whatever dramas are being played out, the plot almost always thickens as a child moves through adolescence toward adulthood.

As it became apparent during the first several interviews that family role assignments and separation dynamics were at the center of the drama of first-generation students, I was struck by how their stories paralleled the formulations of the psychoanalyst Helm Stierlin.[5] As a vehicle of separation, higher education seemed to bring into play the same elemental concerns and feelings that Stierlin believes are found in all separations: "losing and refinding what one holds dearest, deepest distress and joy, conflict and reconciliation . . . the nature of love, of obedience, and of mutual growth and liberation in families" (1974, pp. ix–x).

Stierlin's view of separation rests on his observation that family role assignments are generated by parental needs that are expressed through one of three "transactional modes":

> Where the binding mode prevails, the parents interact with their offspring in ways that keep the latter tied to the parental orbit and locked in the "family ghetto."

> Where the delegating mode is dominant, the child may move out of the parental orbit but remains tied to his parents by the long leash of loyalty. This delegate must then fulfill missions for his parents . . . that embroil him in various forms of conflict.
>
> Where, finally, the expelling mode prevails, parents enduringly neglect and reject their children and consider them nuisances and hindrances to their own goals. A strong centrifugal force pushes many of these children into premature separations. [1974, pp. xii–xiii]

While one mode usually predominates, there are often blends of modes. (As we shall see, their intricacy and variation serve as cautions against a facile or closed taxonomy of family styles.) Furthermore, as already stated, messages about role assignments are passed down through the generations. According to Stierlin, parents who bind their children are likely to have been bound as children, parents who delegate are likely to have been delegated, and parents who expel are likely to have been expelled. This, Stierlin believes, has inevitable consequences for the third generation: "As a result of having themselves been bound, delegated, or expelled, these parents' liberation from their own parents remained aborted. They became burdened with the task of living with, and having to undo, the consequences of their own boundedness, delegation, or expulsion. This, then, caused them to interfere with the kind of mutual liberation that could free their spouses and children, and themselves as well" (1974, p. 188).

This multigenerational effect will be described for each student discussed below. Before turning to the first student, however, it should be noted that in this study students are the sole source of information about their forebears. Thus what is said to be true of previous generations may be so only from a student's perspective. Whether or not they have their facts straight, however, may be less important than their belief that they do. It is, after all, their beliefs that shape—indeed, that constitute—their perceptions of their parents and grandparents.

Lorena Aguillas: Bound and Delegated

During infancy and childhood some binding is helpful and necessary, for the eventual emergence of the self requires an initial fastening to others (Mahler 1968; Bowlby 1969). Some parents, however, try to keep a child forever dependent on them; others, as in the situation described below, attempt to convince a child that they, the parents, are the ones who are dependent, and that unless the child provides

essential satisfactions and securities the parents will suffer and wither (Stierlin 1974, p. 42). Once responsive to such needs, a child's sense of well-being becomes contingent on meeting them. To use Stierlin's metaphor, a child is then gripped by centripetal forces that tie him or her to the family orbit. Enjoying autonomy becomes virtually impossible, for any experimentation with independence raises the specter of treason against the parents. It would be anomalous to find students who were truly bound children, whether first generation or not, and indeed none were interviewed. However, some students did describe a combination of binding and delegation. In effect, they were given conflicting messages: one to stay at home, the other to achieve in the outside world.

Lorena Aguillas found herself facing precisely this dilemma.[6] From a small southwestern town straddling the border between Mexico and the United States, Lorena identified herself as Mexican-American. When interviewed she was a second-semester freshman at an elite, highly selective women's college. Lorena described herself as being considerably closer to and more influenced by her father, a man she characterized as often feeling inferior. He was the first and only child of a short-lived marriage, one still considered a skeleton in the family closet. Adopted by his mother's second husband he felt treated, according to Lorena, as "less important" and as "not really his stepfather's child" in comparison with the four children born of this second marriage. Furthermore, unlike his stepsisters he was not sent to schools across the border to learn English, without which he believed his prospects for success were greatly diminished. Instead, he was taken out of school after the eighth grade to help out in the family-owned bakery: "He still resents it. . . . He tells me that he wanted an education. He says that he's really dumb and stupid and stuff. . . . I think he is smart, but they never gave him a chance. He was very good in school [in Mexico] but when his father said, 'Now you're going to come working with me and sweep the floors,' there was nothing he could say. . . . That's just the way he was raised, that you do what your parents tell you to do."

Taking advantage of what the world had to offer while remaining loyal to his family was, according to Lorena, a lifelong conflict for her father. Indeed, Lorena later described a dramatic reenactment of this conflict in which Mr. Aguillas was torn over where *his* firstborn (Lorena) should be educated: "He always tells me I was born in the United States just in case. We moved back to Mexico for a while and he said he had to make a very tough decision when I was going into first grade, whether he wanted me to go to school in Mexico or go to school in the United States. You see, he thinks that girls or women in Mexico

are much more conservative than they are in the States, and he was afraid that I would become too different than the Mexican women."

Despite his misgivings, he sent his young daughter to school on the "American side of town," but his conflicts over what was to become of Lorena—educationally, culturally, and otherwise—became her own: "I first started thinking about going to college when I was in junior high. I did pretty well in school but my parents wanted me to stay in state, so they're not really happy that I'm here. . . . But if my father's friends or somebody would ask if I'm going to school, he'd say 'Oh, yes, she wants to go to Harvard or Stanford,' or somewhere like that, and I never even wanted to go there, but he would say that. [She laughs.] Those were some pretty nice colleges he said I wanted to go to."

Yet by the time Lorena was a high school senior she indeed did apply to some of this country's most exclusive colleges, receiving more assistance from her father than anyone else:

> I didn't feel a lot of support from teachers at school or anything. They kept saying, "Well, why don't you just go to the University of [name of state]. You know, it's not such a bad school." I'm not saying that it is, but I didn't want to go there. I didn't think it was for me. . . . My mother never said anything either way. . . . I got all the applications done the night before each had to be mailed and my father took them to the post office the next morning and mailed them. . . . When I had to have interviews with _____ and _____ [names of colleges], I had to go to Santa Fe for them, and my father drove me and everything. So it seemed like he was really supportive about it, but it wasn't until after I got accepted that he changed and said, "You can't go!"

According to Lorena, her father's fears were the same as when she was a first grader, though with some contemporary twists: he was afraid, she laughed, "I would become too different, more independent, more liberal, join a religious cult and become a feminist." She added more seriously, "He was afraid of the influences I would have in America."

In addition to his fears for the loss of his daughter's cultural identity, there were other perhaps more self-serving appeals to her loyalty based on two roles Lorena played in the family system. The first was a constellation of confidante, comforter, and helper to her father: "My parents, you know, they get along, but they've never been the kind of couple who really talked to each other or anything, you know, who really discuss important issues about work or something. My dad would

mostly talk to me if he had problems in work or something." This role met with tacit but apparently begrudging maternal consent: "My mother and I really used to fight a lot. I've never been able to talk to her as you would think you would be able to with a mother. . . . I think sometimes that she was jealous because I got along with my father. . . . I think my mother sort of resented that."

It seems, then, that the side of Lorena's father that was threatened with the loss of her support refused to let her go. Indeed, during the months between her admission to college and her departure from home he became—for the first time in Lorena's memory—silent, sullen, brooding, and angry.

> He was really upset. And, I don't know, we always got along real well, so it was hard for me, because for five months he was really weird with me. He was rude and didn't treat me nice. One day he told me, "Do whatever you want!" He got mad. He was angry because I wouldn't listen to reason and stay home. . . . He told me later that when he said that, he was sure that I was going to say, "Well, O.K., he doesn't want me to go, so I'll stay." I didn't, I said, "Well, I'm going to go." And so he said, "Well, I'm not going to give you any money to go to school. And I'm not going to sign any paper to let you go."

Though Lorena received generous financial aid, her father was unyielding. Their first protracted struggle was at a stalemate, and for Lorena it was agonizing. For her mother, however, who was still sitting quietly on the sidelines, their struggle offered an opportunity to be heard, rescue Lorena, and get Lorena out of the house, all at the same time:

> My mother stepped in and I got the shock of my life because I had never seen my mother actually tell my dad, "You shouldn't." But one day my mom said, "If you weren't going to let her go you should not have let her apply." And I think he was sort of shocked too. He just looked at her like, [wide-eyed] "What are you saying?" Because my mom has been really settled down. She's been like most typical Mexican women are supposed to be. You're supposed to do whatever your husband says and you don't answer back to him or tell him anything. But she told him.

Apparently affected by his wife's assertiveness and the finality of his daughter's decision, Mr. Aguillas relented somewhat in the days before Lorena left. On her next to last day at home, saying he was still angry, he presented her with a credit card to be used for emergency

purchases, but especially if she wished to fly home. The following day he drove her to the airport.[7]

Mr. Aguillas could drive Lorena to the airport because her second role assignment was to be his delegate, with a mission of enhancing his self-imagery by fulfilling (exceeding, really) the unmet aspirations he once had for himself. This was the part of her father that prematurely boasted to his friends about her attending an elite college, that mailed her completed application forms, and that drove her to interviews. While seemingly contradictory, in one fundamental sense it was not, for it is the paradox of delegation (as discussed more fully in the next section) that the leaving itself is a sign of allegiance. In other words, Lorena's determination to go to college, especially an elite one, appealed to this second set of paternal needs and so satisfied one set of loyalty demands at the same time that it violated the other (that she remain at home).

Lorena, then, was pitted between incompatible role assignments. If she left she was disloyal in her role as a paternal comforter and confidante; if she stayed, she was disloyal in her role as an emissary. By leaving as she did, the conflict, of course, remained unresolved. Through the mail, over the telephone, and at home on vacation, Lorena endured an onslaught of entreaties from her father to withdraw from college and return to his side:

> The thing that gets to me a lot when I go home is that my father continually, every day, tells me that he needs me to come home. He just tells me, "It's so silly for you to still be there. You should come home and go to [the local college]." You see, he owns a bakery store in Mexico also, but with the devaluation of the peso he has to sell out. Well, he owns two mortgages on the house and says they're going to take the house away from them, and he wants to open a restaurant. But he wants me to stay there next year and help him out with the store. But I don't really think I should stop my education to go and help him. Not because I don't want to help him, but because I'm not sure I would be able to get into the track of things again, come back and take up where I left off. . . . It makes me feel kind of in the middle with what I want and what he wants, because I do respect a lot at times what he wants and I would like to help him. But I don't think it's really fair of him to ask this of me, for me to stop. Because this is really what I want to do with my life now. I said I would help him all summer, seven days a week in the store [and forgo an undergraduate hospital internship to help her decide whether to be a premedical student]. . . . But he wants me to go to school nearby, help out

> at night and weekends, and I'm sure he wants me to live at home. . . . It's awfully hard because it makes me feel like I've been a bad daughter. It's hard.

As stated earlier, offspring paralyzed by "breakaway guilt" feel that one or both parents are so dependent on them that to leave is criminal; it is tantamount to abandonment and betrayal (Stierlin 1974, p. 50). Were Lorena so immobilized she would be unable to fend off her father's pleas, just as Mr. Aguillas was unable to fend off those of his father a generation earlier. Yet she is not wholly emancipated, feeling still burdened by the pain of the "bad daughter." Despite her ambivalence she intends neither to atone by ruefully returning home nor to sever ties with her father. Instead, she seeks ways to help him that do not require a forfeiture of self or a foreclosure of career, and that thereby avoid the resentment Mr. Aguillas knows all too well. To say it differently, she wishes to establish a "related individuation" or a "separated attachment," in which her connectedness is expressed through empathic caring, but her autonomy is respected.[8]

Two qualifications are in order. First, norms and values regulating separation—its style, timing, pace, extent, and desirability—are historically and culturally variable. There is no inherently superior process or outcome of separation apart from considerations of time and place. For example, in many traditional societies with extended local kinship systems, separation as described here is alien, devalued, and even stigmatized; and in those modern societies where the cultural ideal of a successful separation is a state of "related individuation," such an ideal can be seen as promoting individual achievement and mobility while deflecting the guilt of disloyalty to family or community. Thus, in both traditional and modern societies, norms and values surrounding separation have an ideological function in that they help buttress a particular social, economic, and political system. From this perspective, then, the emotions that tether children to the family or loosen them from it are themselves shaped by the larger culture.

The second qualification is prompted by the report of a white, urban, working-class student who described a series of appeals from his parents to drop out of college. Their appeals were similar in content and motive to those heard by Lorena: "It's your turn among the children to work," they pleaded, and "That's not our way." These two families, so different in culture and locale, remind us that while attempts to bind children and to undermine their education may not be typical of any group—Mexican-American, Anglo, or others—such attempts may be found in all groups.

Don Peatro and Lisa Collins: Delegates

The verb delegate—from the Latin *delegare,* to send out, to assign—means to be entrusted with the responsibility of acting for another. To act responsibly, to be a "good delegate," therefore, requires going out into the world to promote the interests, wishes, or needs of another rather than one's own, unless, of course, they coincide. Thus, while a delegate is sent out, he or she is also held on to by a "long leash of loyalty." Like Lorena Aguillas, offspring in this situation are subject to "conflicting tendencies and hence to centrifugal as well as centripetal pressures" (Stierlin 1974, p. 52). What distinguishes the delegated from the bound child, however, is that the former demonstrates loyalty by leaving the family, not by staying in it. Leaving, or, more accurately, leaving as a delegate, paradoxically becomes a proof of allegiance and even of love.

Delegation is by no means always enslaving or exploitative. "More often it is the expression of a necessary and legitimate process of relationship. . . . Delegation gives our lives direction and significance [and our parents' lives meaning and satisfaction]. . . . As delegates of our parents, we have the possibility of proving our loyalty and integrity and of fulfilling missions reaching beyond purely personal levels" (Stierlin 1980, pp. 23–24). Furthermore, many parents simply do not delegate. They may still want things for and from their children, and may tell them so, sometimes with great clarity and concern, but their sense of well-being does not rest on filial compliance. This in turn makes it more likely that tensions and conflicts between parent and child can be defined and settled and is what distinguishes parental aspirations for their children from parental delegations to their children. As it happened, there were no "happily delegated" students among those I interviewed. This may well be a consequence of having a self-selected sample, with less troubled students being less likely to respond to an advertisement. The assumption here is that interviewees wanted to talk of some distress, a point covered earlier.[9]

A delegation becomes troublesome and potentially injurious when a child, regardless of age, is so weighed down by it that he follows his parents' needs and wishes at the expense of his own separation and growth; that is, he does not become a person in his own right. Usually this happens when a child attempts to bear, reconcile, redeem, or repair something for one or both parents; perhaps it is a conflict, a disowned feeling, or an inner doubt about the self. A person's sense of well-being, and in an extreme case even the foundation of a personality, may consequently rest on successfully carrying out a mission

(Framo 1972, p. 281). Such a person is, in regard to parents at least, underindividuated (fused in the extreme case), having weak and porous psychological boundaries. Unable to stand separately, he or she cannot refuse parental delegations without experiencing much inner conflict. Don Peatro, as we shall soon see, is such a young man.

Lisa Collins is a second example of a delegated student. Lisa, however, is in the throes of rebelling against her delegation, and her objections and anger regarding it erupt easily. Her mother, described below, is threatened and infuriated by Lisa's strivings for autonomy, and mother and daughter find themselves rigidly entrenched against each other. Thus the Collins family is a mirror image of the Peatros. Where the Peatros are father and son acting in concert, the Collinses are mother and daughter locked in battle; where Don Peatro is too little differentiated from his father, Lisa Collins is overdifferentiated from her mother, and so feels isolated and estranged from her. As with Lorena, these students too will be seen in the context of three generations.

Don Peatro: The Arrival

> This is a favorite story of my dad's. My grandfather came from Palermo and worked in a sweatshop in the garment district in New York. They lived in the projects after a while. My grandfather had no schooling. . . . My dad really emphasizes how hard my grandfather worked in the sweatshop. My father became a letter carrier and he's hoping that [the name of his college] for me will be "the arrival."

Don is an 18-year-old second-semester freshman at an elite, academically demanding liberal arts college. He talks fluently and intensely about the three-generation family legacy he brings to campus. His grandfather's struggle to build a better life for his children is a familiar story in the American experience, better known perhaps than that of the ghosts such quests can visit on succeeding generations. "My grandfather was very, very strict. I think it bothered my dad. He told me how he would ask for money and my grandfather would say, 'Do you know how hard I worked for this?' and give this kind of doling out motion, very slowly, saying, 'I don't want you to work like this.'"

After graduating from high school, Mr. Peatro married and enrolled in a technical school but dropped out after a few months when Don, the first of his three children, was born. He then went to work in the local post office where he still works after 20 years. The passing on of the delegation is direct and clear.

> My father feels pretty unhappy in his job. . . . He really feels very strongly that I should get out of the working class. He feels trapped in his job. That's something he never wants me to feel. Dad and I have had long talks about this. . . . My dad is very negative about being working class. . . . It's very apparent. I think he obviously feels he could have been more. . . . He feels he doesn't have enough and he should have more and I'm going to be the culmination of "the more." My dad definitely sees my going to college as a key to the doors of the life that he and my grandfather wanted. [Imitating his father]: "Don, your grandfather would be so proud to see you going to college. You don't understand how we lived when we were young." My going to college is playing out what he wishes he could have done. . . . What my father has always told me is, "Do you see these affluent people, Don? You can have that too." And I guess I really believe it.

Delegations frequently come more from one parent than the other, and in Don's case the mother seems to play a lesser role not because she is uninterested in his education, but because for her his education has no mission-like functions. Reports Don, "My mother is pretty satisfied with the way she is. I think she's happier than my dad is in her job (a store clerk) because she knows she should be. . . . My mom I don't see as having as much of an influence on my education, like having an ideal sort of view. But she is more practical, saying things like, 'Have you done your homework?' "

By contrast, Don's father is depicted as beseeching him to provide a sense of worthwhileness and completeness, nowhere more evident than in Don's reporting him to have said, "So study, go to a good college, *so I can feel like I did something*" (emphasis added). To say it differently, Mr. Peatro's hopes for his son seem not for the son alone, but rather appear to be mixed with a mission to heal some private doubt. Without speaking directly with Mr. Peatro it cannot be said with certainty that this doubt derives from some sense of failure regarding his own father's stern injunction ("I don't want you to work like this"). We do know, however, that Mr. Peatro feels unhappy and trapped in his work. If Don has been enlisted in an effort to ease his father's burden, then the voice of the now-dead grandfather still reverberates, for his name is still invoked as one who would have been proud. What remains unsaid is that Don's father can feel proud too, not only of his son, but of himself in the memory he holds of his father.

It is not surprising, then, that Don also reports that he knew at an early age that college was for him and he for college. For his part Don has played the attendant son, obeying parental entreaties by always

having done well in school and by acquiring the confidence and self-imagery of an academically superior student. Of concern is whether the autonomy and sense of self thereby gained are to some extent false, fragile, or conflict laden as a result of resting so heavily on meeting his father's needs. There are indications that this is the case, and, further, that Don is aware of it. In one interview, for example, Don several times seems to slide in and out of awareness of his father's self-serving motives and his (Don's) own skepticism about them. One minute he is sure his father is right about things and is "only doing what is best for me," yet in the next Don fears he has been overadaptive. For example:

> My senior year [in high school] was a very pressured year and I felt that my dad was putting too much pressure on me. But the thing was he always showed me that I could achieve. I mean, my father's favorite line is "hit the books." But I wished he would say it a little bit less often, yet I felt that he was right. I felt that I could achieve, but I just wished he'd kind of shut up about it for a little while and give me the chance to believe it more for me, and make sure it was for me and not for him. . . . Sometimes I do feel that if I don't achieve—like first semester I wondered if I don't do well—who am I doing well for? Am I doing well for me or doing well for my dad? The answer is he's really right. He's pushing me to achieve. He really is looking out for my best interest, but if I did not finish college he would give me a hard time for a long while. To some point how I feel about me is related to it. I think that's because I respect what he is saying, but is it just because I respect him as my father or do I really believe in his principles? I don't think I have a good perspective on how much of it is his personal concern for me or his personal concern for himself, though I'd see more if I wanted to. I could see myself thinking more about it, but he's my dad and that's not something I would choose to do.

Accepting a delegation so completely risks a diminished individuation, creating the soft, easily penetrable boundaries referred to earlier. Parental voices may come to sound stronger than one's own and can easily drown it out: "I am very concerned with whether I am making decisions for me, or am I making them for my girlfriend, or am I being influenced by my roommate, my mom and my dad? I listen too much. I listen too hard. I take too much personally. I listen to everything everyone else says. I guess I have to learn not to listen to everything, just to be more selective."

While Don expressed some skepticism about his father's delegation and his own acceptance of it, there remains the possibility of someday

repudiating, altering, or fleeing his mission. That further developmental progress—that is, further intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturation and sophistication—may lead to a greater questioning of family matters is considered in a later section.

Lisa Collins: The Exemplar

Over the past three generations, Lisa Collins's family has been inching its way into the middle class. Of her two paternal great-grandfathers, both immigrants from Wales, one was a ship's carpenter, the other a laborer and alcoholic who died young. Her paternal grandfather was a hardworking jack-of-all-trades who at 13 was called upon by his father's death to support his mother and four siblings. Lisa's father is a trade school graduate who after many years as a tool and die maker recently acquired his own small shop. Lisa knows little of her maternal great-grandparents, both Irish, but their lives—their deaths actually—have touched her deeply. Her mother's mother died in her late thirties, six weeks after giving birth to her twelfth child. Her husband, an alcoholic, died shortly after, and the children were scattered among aunts, uncles, and cousins. Alone among her brothers and sisters, Mrs. Collins was sent at age 12 to live with her cousins in America. She now has seven children of her own, Lisa at 19 the eldest, and throughout her married life has taken in a succession of foster children. In 1984 Mrs. Collins moved the family to Ireland for a reunification, while Mr. Collins stayed behind, visiting on his vacations.

In Ireland Lisa attended a small, rural high school where she was at the top of her class. The parents' plan was that Lisa would apply to American colleges from Ireland, and that after her high school graduation the family would return to New England. This they did.

Throughout her life the first of Lisa's missions was to be an exemplar to her younger brothers and sisters. It was as if her parents had said, "Be a shining example by becoming successful in ways we approve; otherwise, you will cause us even more to worry about the others and we will consider you disobedient and, worse, disloyal." Lisa reports, "Probably the biggest thing about growing up in my family is that I'm the oldest, and there's so many of us. I had to be very responsible and, it was not so much living a rigid routine but *having my life set up and trying not to veer from my parents' direction but not always to accept it.* So, being the oldest, I had to be the ground breaker for the others."

The emphasized words call attention to Lisa's struggle to exercise her autonomy without betraying her parents. (Nor did Lisa want to betray her siblings, wondering if they might find it helpful to see her

defy as well as serve her parents.) Perhaps inevitably, conflict followed: "Their opinion was, 'Your life is your own.' But there were limits to that. . . . They would help me with whatever I wanted to do, but they wouldn't put up with anything 'wishy-washy.' But at the same time, when it comes to—this is a recent argument—feminism, lesbianism, questioning your religion [Roman Catholic], if you got into anything too radical at all, it would in no way be tolerated. Right now my mom wants me to move back home next year because of this stuff, and I'm fighting it. My dad is undecided on it."

The tensions between Lisa and her parents, then, concerned not only Lisa's recent questioning of sex roles and religion—the problem of children offending their parents' values is hardly unusual—but also her reliability as a trustworthy delegate. Consequently, Lisa and her mother (only sometimes her father, as explained below) were embroiled in several battles over such matters as her friends (bohemian actors, poets, and artists, most of whom were not students), life-style (pages concerning premarital sex "fell" from Lisa's diary and were found and read by Mrs. Collins), ideology and reading material (feminism and its literature), academic major (she recently switched from English to a self-designed major in modern European thought), and self-presentation (slightly punk in clothes and hairstyle).[10] In these struggles Lisa refused to abdicate:

> I don't think they're realizing all the changes I'm going through, and I don't think they're too fond of what I'm going through, and they'd like to be able to control me a lot more. I think they're afraid that they're not able to decide what I'm up to, the friends I'm keeping, my whole life-style. They want to have a lot more control. . . . I keep wanting to say, "I'm really sorry, like I really wish I could do as you say, but I can't." And then other times I'm like, "Well, it's your own tough luck, you know. This is my life, not your life." It's really confusing, and I think if they put a lot of pressure on me I'd freak strongly one way or the other.

Some ambivalence always accompanies adolescent separation; yet Lisa may also have been responding to the confusion surrounding her mission that she sensed in her parents, a confusion that centered not on whether to be an exemplar, but on how: "I think my parents both feel, 'You can have a job, but as soon as you get married you give it up.' But I've got a couple of cousins who have kids and work at the same time, and my parents are really unsure about them. They say, 'Oh, isn't she wonderful,' and 'Isn't it great how she can balance work and home life?' But then they might go and say, 'But, you know, she

leaves her children at home,' and that kind of thing, and, 'You know, she's never there for them.' "

Not all the sources of Lisa's confusion were family centered, however. On campus Lisa was introduced to a larger and more intellectual world, and her exhilaration over this fueled if not always guided her separation: "I was seeing so many other things! It was like all of a sudden I saw this whole world and I wanted to do everything all at once. First I said, 'I want to study literature,' but then it was like, 'Well, what about history and philosophy and political science?' I had finally seen all these things that I wanted to do all at once. . . . But my parents, they don't know what this means."

In general, Lisa seemed to want a different way in which she and her parents could love each other as she moved into adulthood and society. The importance of such a redefined love acquired a new prominence when, two weeks before our first interview, Lisa's cousin who was thought to be gay killed himself. She asked her parents, " 'Well, wouldn't you have loved him just as much [if you knew he was gay]?' And they said, 'No!' And I like freaked out and now my mother thinks I'm a lesbian [Lisa reports she is not] and major controversies are going on over this. She has this idea that I'm just 'way up there,' somewhere and she wants to drag me back."

Most upsetting to Lisa is the idea that when a family member becomes "too different" love stops, for it is precisely this charge of differentness that has been leveled against her in regard to sexuality, ideology, self-presentation, and so on. The message, then, is that to cast off her mission as the exemplar is to risk abandonment: "I think my mother is afraid that I'm going to leave the family, and especially because—it sounds really awful—but my brothers and sisters always seemed to do whatever I did, and she feels as long as she keeps me in line, she can keep the rest of them in line. See, in our [extended] family there's always like a couple of black sheep; well, there's a lot of them, but they're usually not talked about and they're really kept, you know, undercover, like my cousin who committed suicide."

Like Don, Lisa is bound to her family through her ordination as a delegate. Furthermore, she feels trapped and angry by the way her mother's attempts to define the meaning and boundaries of the family undermine her efforts to differentiate herself. Unlike Don, however, Lisa expresses her anger by being oppositional: "To a point I do things my mother dislikes. I mean, when I start doing things she dislikes I hear her voice. Lately, I just do the opposite of what her voice is telling me, and then sort of come back to try to find the medium range somewhere. [I do this] because I'm really angry at it, that I'm so sick of being 'the good daughter' and the 'good sister,' and I want to live

my own life, and I want to be able to find it without her voice trying to confuse me and tell me what to do."

There are, I believe, even deeper sources of Lisa's anger, sources having to do with the delegation that gave rise to the mission in the first place, and that made its fulfillment so imperative. The first has to do with the family's slow climb into the middle class, as already described. In a sociological sense there is a certain status anxiety that can be relieved should Lisa's accomplishments take the family one step further; her reflected glory confers additional "status honor," as Max Weber called it (1968, p. 932), and an enhanced respectability as well. For the Collins family it is not the condescending, snobbish respectability associated with the nouveau riche but rather a respectability born of the straitlaced self-control, moderation, and family stability emphasized in the lower middle class (Kahl 1957, pp. 202–5). Indeed, Lisa's description of her mother evokes the image of Willy Loman and his insistence on displays of this latter type of respectability, whatever may have gone on behind closed doors. "My mother always had this thing that I was a disgrace to the family by dying my hair or by cutting it really short like I did the last time. I was a disgrace to the family then, too. . . . So if I become a good mother, if I find a good husband, and I get a good job, if I remain a Catholic, I'm like more 'respectable.' As long as I follow what everybody accepts, then I'm accepted. But if I don't, then she has to hide me under the rug."

As we have seen, however, in searching for her own voice Lisa does not always wish to assist in these shows of estimableness, even if it does upset her mother. (Is she Biff finally gone to college?) On such occasions Mrs. Collins insists on being the arbiter of acceptability, and in effect reminds Lisa that her noncooperation—her disloyalty, really—is so deeply discrediting and hurtful that it may threaten her membership in the family. This, of course, is the stuff of breakaway guilt, and it contributes significantly to Lisa's anger. And so the wheels of conflict within and between Lisa and her mother grind on.

A second source of Lisa's anger is suggested by the reported intensity of Mrs. Collins's responses to Lisa's separation attempts. It is a feature of multigenerational delegations we have seen before, though in other guises and with other particulars: Lisa has been asked to help enhance her mother's self-esteem and respectability, in this case by furthering Mrs. Collins's acceptance into her husband's family. These needs are traced by Lisa to her mother's own childhood:

> If I don't do something for her to be proud of, it's a disgrace to the family, and especially since she married into my father's family, it's become her family, because she didn't have one of her own. . . .

> So they make sure that all the aunts and uncles and cousins know that I'm at _____ College, and that I'm doing very well and that kind of thing. . . . And a lot of it is competition. *I think especially my mother feels that I'm her report card. Sort of like, "She is my life's work," and what I stand for is what she stands for. . . . It's sort of like Michelangelo making a statue and sort of what it stands for, not so much what it is exactly.* [Emphasis added]

This second source of upset, then, appeared to flow from Lisa's feelings of being exploited, that is, of being loved for her mission-related achievements and not for herself.[11] That she felt her mother's love was so contingent was also seen in her descriptions of Mrs. Collins's reactions to her strivings for autonomy. According to Lisa, her mother (not always inaccurately) took these attempts as a rejection of the delegation and, therefore, as an assault on herself: "She gets angry because what I do is a reflection on her, you know, that I'm turning on her. Like it's me attacking her."

Mr. Collins, on the other hand, gave Lisa no sign of feeling intentionally denied or hurt by her. As described by Lisa, his sense of well-being did not pivot on her accomplishments or lack of them; in short, there appeared to be no delegation from him. Consequently, he seemed more willing to "let go" and accept her independence. For example, though reported to be taciturn, Lisa described a letter from him acknowledging that while he missed the way things used to be, he understood that time was not standing still and that she may never again live at home. The tone, Lisa reported, was maudlin, not angry or demanding.

As much as Lisa enjoyed her intellectual awakening, she knew she was encumbered by family tensions. During one interview she complained that her academic performance had suffered as a result. She is a good student with a B average on a competitive campus, she told me, but feels demoralized at times, weighed down by family "hassles" that tire her. After the tape recorder was put away and I was thanking her for the interview, she added wistfully that she wished she didn't expend so much "psychological energy" thinking about her family and herself. It made her feel "up and down," she said, and then asked whether other students I had talked with had similar feelings. In one way or another, I told her, the answer was yes.

Betty Smith: Expelled and Delegated

Stierlin's third and last mode of intergenerational separation is an expelling one. Expelling has a positive and legitimate function, as

when a child is pushed from the nest to progress toward a more mature independence. However, it can "become malignant when directed toward a child who still requires nurturant care and executive control and who, instead of needing exposure to the cold winds of autonomy and competition, needs shelter, caring intimacy and guidance in a bewildering world" (Stierlin 1974, p. 126). The tensions that lead to expulsions of this kind typically fester for years, sometimes reaching an explosive climax, as when a child is thrown out or runs away; whether or not such a climax occurs, the child is usually emotionally and socially denied full family membership.

Betty Smith, a second-semester freshman at a state college, was so excluded. She was in her family but not of it, cast down but not out. In explaining, Betty referred to the circumstances of her birth: "When my mother and father broke up, my mother didn't know she was pregnant with me, so I was a going-away present. I was the end, which as far as I know was not amicable. So I was not exactly welcomed as the flowers in spring, tra-la, tra-la. And I was two-and-a-half months early. And I was developmentally delayed. I came into the world with all the odds against me. And I survived."

Abandoned by her father whom she never saw or heard from, Betty went on to endure a sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, but always painful rejection. Her underlying sense of being unwanted is a common feeling among expelled children (Stierlin 1974, p. 66). More specifically, Betty described a lifetime of feeling apart and different, and of doubting that her apartness and differentness were respected. The following passage, necessarily lengthy, illustrates her position in the family as well as her deeply unsettled and mixed feelings about it. At one moment she exalts her apartness and differentness, proclaiming them as virtues; in the next she worries they are signs of being disowned and devalued, and she fears always having been disliked and seen as strange because of them:

> I was never outfitted to stay at home. You know, the Mommy who bakes the brownies and the bread. I knew that when I was a little kid, but more so when I went into _____ High School [a public school with the highest competitive admissions standards in her city]. We [Betty and her classmates] did not have any home economics courses at all. None. Not even how to cook an egg. Nothing. No sewing courses either. Because it was expected we were going to college. . . . I didn't learn to cook or sew like my [five] sisters did at home. . . . They were just more homebodied because they were taught to do those things. When I was a young girl you couldn't get me outside to play. I didn't like to play. I didn't like board games. Nothing! Chutes and Ladders, Monopoly.

> Nothing. I don't like games. I don't like cards [said proudly]. I liked to sit in a corner and read, and that's what I always did as a kid . . . Greek myths, or black history. Anything. I just loved to read. I've always liked to be left alone. . . . I was too different from my sisters. I didn't have anything in common with them. . . . My mother would make us dress, not all exactly alike, the same material, but a different style. Mine might have one bow, but theirs would have two. . . . And their beds were together [in the same room] and mine was separate. . . . But I was always sort of like separate and different. . . . I've always felt being different was bad, because I was always made to feel so bad for being different. And I hated it, and I always said I just wanted to be normal. People pick on you if you're very, very smart. People pick on you. They think you're a Miss-Know-It-All. They think you're a wiseass, or, "Here's the dictionary. Here comes the walking encyclopedia." And I was already getting teased about wearing glasses, being light-skinned, not being able to play sports. I mean I couldn't do anything to please these people. Everything you do is wrong. You get tired of that. Honey, I did back flips when Vanessa Williams won her [Miss America] title. I said, "Hot damn. A light-skinned black." I was in heaven. I said, "Yea! One of us won." I just get so sick of being teased about everything. I mean the skin color was wrong, my hair color was wrong, and it wasn't nappy enough. I wasn't black enough. I wasn't white enough. I was too smart for my own good. I had a big mouth. And I was shaped wrong. This is part of the reason I came back to school [after working a few years], because I couldn't deal with that anymore.

Though Betty recognized that her intellectualism contributed to her exclusion, it was a trait of which she was nonetheless proud. Indeed, Betty appeared to be swinging between two poles without stopping at either, never sure whether she was excluded because she was different, or different because she was excluded. Yet to whatever extent her siblings conspired in her ostracism, it was difficult not to see their mother's inspiration. Nowhere was this more forcefully and painfully dramatized than when after remarrying, Betty's mother changed her children's last name from her first to her second husband's, but excluded Betty: "I was jealous of them. They got their last names changed and I didn't. I was very jealous. They get a new name, why didn't I get one? It sounds kind of, it's crazy."

Another facet of Betty's exclusion was her loneliness, both in the family and on campus. Like other children who experience some form of expulsion, Betty felt unlikable and was highly vulnerable to rejection, and so perpetuated her loneliness: "I never was really that close [with her brothers and sisters]. I don't get close to people. . . . I'm just one

of those people who don't like to reach out that much, because I figure if I reach out I might get hurt, so I just stay very New Englandish in that regard. . . . Before I moved out of my mother's house I was closest to myself. Basically, myself."

Betty's exclusion, however, was attenuated in at least two ways. First, in the curious workings of family life playing the role of the excluded one can itself be a form of involvement and hence inclusion: it does, after all, require the cooperation of family members to sustain the role, an activity necessitating considerable thought and expenditure of energy.[12] Second, Betty's mother recognized her academic abilities and insisted that they be cultivated. Reported Betty: "I wanted to go to a nice, normal, everyday high school where I could kick back and raise a little Cain. [Imitating her mother:] 'You need a challenge. You will go to [the most competitive high school in the city].' I didn't want to go, but she made me. . . . Later it got to be fun."

By demanding attendance at a superior high school her mother may have furthered Betty's exclusion, but this does not appear to be the action of a wholly callous and spiteful mother. (How much more insidious it would have been to deny Betty such opportunity!) Rather, it seems that her mother found through schooling a way of expressing both her resentment and her caring. Furthermore, in addition to being excluded Betty may well have been delegated the task of becoming formally educated: as reported by Betty, her mother also went to a competitive high school (that is, one which had academic entrance requirements), but was expelled when she became pregnant with Betty's older sister. Betty, though, did not state directly that by matriculating she felt she was acting on behalf of her mother, a requirement of delegation. However, she was the only one of her five sisters and three brothers to go to college.

Despite the costs Betty eventually responded to her exclusion by embracing her apartness and difference, expressing both through precocious academic achievement. I am brought back to her earlier words about her matriculation, words spoken after a litany of complaints about the penalties of being too smart, having too large a vocabulary, possessing the wrong physical characteristics—the penalties, in short, of being an outsider in her own family. Said Betty, "Part of the reason I came back to school, [was] because I couldn't deal with that anymore." She continued:

> I think the fight with my sister last year is what did it. My sister said, "I'm not a fink like you. I didn't go to _____ [the name of Betty's selective high school]." Hell, she didn't graduate from any school. I got sick of being treated different and being made to

> feel like I did something wrong because I was different. Until last year [when Betty matriculated] I always felt it was bad. I don't care anymore. I've gotten to the point where I say, "I'm different. So what? Sue me. And if you're successful I want the name of your lawyer because I want to study under him."

In conclusion, over the years Betty's education helped her negotiate a potentially damaging separation, one which was, after all, adulterated, premature, and overly intense. Her loneliness never disappeared, but through her books was transformed into a thoughtful solitude. Reading and learning thus became a salve and finally a badge of specialness and honor. Education became the cloak that warmed her chilled heart, and school a house into which she could repair to build the strength to face her family, the world, herself.

The Voices of Education

Listening and relistening to the tapes from the distance of time and place I was struck by the power students attributed to family voices. Lorena, Don, Lisa, Betty, and the others not described here, all spoke of voices, as if their present struggles to find their own amplified the entreaties, whispers, or growls heard at home. I was also impressed by a second power of these family voices—their staying power, and, indirectly, by how that power confirmed the applicability of Stierlin's multigenerational approach to family dynamics. Spoken and heard across the generations, these voices had become woven into the fabric of the family tapestry and their messages imprinted into personal consciousness. As the observing chorus intones in T. S. Eliot's "The Family Reunion":

> In an old house there is always listening, and more is heard than is spoken.
> And what is spoken remains in the room, waiting for the future to hear it.
> And whatever happens began in the past, and presses hard on the future.
> The agony in the curtained bedroom, whether of birth or of dying,
> Gathers in to itself all the voices of the past, and projects them into the future.

Qualifications

Some qualifications are in order. First, it should not be assumed that family forces are the only propelling ones. The full interviews reveal additional reasons for matriculation—career preparation, intellectual fulfillment, and social standing, for example—that are part of what probably is an ever-shifting hierarchy of motives. To omit the family from consideration, however, is to miss something of importance.

Second, during adolescence and early adulthood the maturation of intellectual and moral capacities may by itself help promote more differentiation and autonomy. Writes Stierlin of the adolescent: "He enlarges his vocabulary of human motives and increases his grasp of psychological complexity. And he now experiences emotions as states of the self rather than as correlates of external events. Therefore, he can increasingly differentiate and clarify conflicting attitudes, intentions, needs, and motives within himself, and importantly, within others" (1974, p. 11).

It may be that the students described here have only recently found and begun to use these enhanced abilities. Furthermore, they may well have been interviewed at some developmentally sensitive midpoint in their separation from family. I think here of the ambivalence and the sliding in and out of different levels of awareness of Don and Betty in particular, and of the latter's recent claim of emancipation. ("I'm different. So what? Sue me!")

Third, college-educated parents also bind, delegate, and expel their children. However, when separation struggles occur in such families, they are, I suspect, less likely played out around whether to go to college (unless the child decides not to go) than around where to go to college, choice of academic major, grades, life-style, personal appearance, or some other idiosyncratic matter (Sacks 1978; London 1986).

Conclusion

By their very presence on campus the students described here have beaten the statistical odds. It is, of course, of great concern that there are odds to beat in the first place; indeed, sociologists have long been investigating the structural sources and functions of inequality in general, and educational inequality in particular. Rather than enter that argument, I have instead attempted to widen its dimensions by detailing

some of the more intimate dynamics and circumstances of educational mobility.

From a wider cultural perspective the stories of these first-generation students dramatize the consequences for individuals of the shift from a traditional to a modern society. In traditional societies intergenerational continuity—in the areas of work, family, religion, and community—encourages the formation of a secure identity. Industrial societies, however, permit and even require the making of choices in these areas, so that people are less certain of how and where and with whom they will find themselves. Thus the past is no longer as effective a guide to the present or the future, and the ethic of individual achievement and upward mobility that we, on the one hand, extol can, on the other, produce a discontinuity that cleaves families and friends. It is only when we see that mobility involves not just gain but loss—most of all the loss of a familiar past, including a past self—that we can begin to understand the attendant periods of confusion, conflict, isolation, and even anguish that first-generation students report here. To say it differently, for the students who are the subject of this article modernity creates the potential for biographical and social dislocation, so that freedom of choice, to whatever extent it exists, can also be the agony of choice.

While some first-generation students no doubt experience smooth transitions, others, like those described here, find the going rough. As educators we do these latter students no great favor should they become—out of our own unawareness—confused, frightened, and alienated, only to drift away and drop out. If we—faculty, administrators, and support staff—mean for them to stay and not become attrition statistics, we need a keener understanding of the sensibilities and concerns they bring with them and of the difficulties they encounter along the way. In this regard I hope this article is helpful.

Notes

For their various forms of inspiration and helpful criticism I would like to thank Barbara Spivak, Barbara Schildkrout, David Riesman, Sophie Freud, Helen Reinherz, Bill Levin, David Karp, and two anonymous reviewers. To the students who gave of themselves, here are your stories, respectfully told.

1. An extensive discussion of the relationships between separation, loss, and growth is found in John Bowlby's *Attachment and Loss* (1969). A more recent treatment is Judith Viorst's *Necessary Losses* (1986), a book whose topic is of such appeal to college students that it remained on campus best-seller lists throughout 1987 and 1988 (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 1987, 1988). A sensitive autobiographical account of education as a vehicle of separation is Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* (1982).

2. The composition of the "sample" by sex and type of college is:

Type of College	Male	Female
State colleges/universities	2	3
Private women's colleges	···	2
Private colleges/universities	4	4

3. Paraphrased from the comment of an anonymous reviewer.

4. In many cultures separation from parents—geographically, emotionally, cognitively, morally, or in terms of fealty—is less extensive and sometimes proscribed. This is discussed in a later section describing a first-generation student who comes from such a culture.

5. Stierlin focuses on how separation can go awry—especially in the families of runaway, schizophrenic, and "wayward" adolescents—in the belief that faulty cases more clearly show what is at stake, and because they provide important insights into the separation process in general. So that there is no mistake, this is not at all to imply that being the first in one's family to go to college is a sign of poor family functioning. It may in fact be quite the opposite, since individuation and separation may be negotiated well or not in any family regardless of the educational attainment of its members. Thus it is important to keep in mind that when this paper focuses on conflict and loss it is because these inhere in the separation process, not because there is necessarily something "wrong" with the families under scrutiny.

6. Names and identifying information have been changed. Quotations are verbatim except for minor editorial changes for clarity's sake. A series of periods indicates nonessential material has been omitted.

7. With these shifts in family life Lorena reported a steadily improved relationship with her mother.

8. Other forms of individuation are over- and underindividuation. The former refers to fusion with others, the latter to isolation from others. The next section considers these concepts further.

9. Two twists are provided by David Riesman (in personal correspondence). First, some students may attend universities so remote from parental imagination that their parents leave them alone to do what they want. Second, education is not the only road up, and delegations can and do take many noneducational forms.

10. This raises the question (not pursued in the interviews) of Lisa also being delegated the incompatible task of expressing her mother's longings. By dwelling on the differences between Lisa and herself, Mrs. Collins may have been subtly encouraging Lisa to "act out," thus making Lisa's separation all the more difficult. See Stierlin for an interesting discussion of this kind of dynamic (1974, p. 83).

11. Writes Alice Miller of children who awaken from such circumstances: " 'What would have happened if I had appeared before you, bad, ugly, angry, jealous, lazy, dirty, smelly? Where would your love have been then? And I was all these things as well. Does this mean that it was not really me whom you loved, but only what I pretended to be? The well-behaved, reliable, empathic, understanding, and convenient child, who in fact was never a child at all? What became of my childhood? Have I not been cheated out of it? I can never

return to it. I can never make up for it. From the beginning I have been a little adult. My abilities—were they simply misused?' These questions are accompanied by much grief and pain" (1981, p. 15).

12. This applies to the role of the physically expelled as well as the socially excluded: one need not be physically present to play a part in the lives of others, or they in ours.

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